



Routes de lecture

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"Black literature has generated an abundant criticism, even too abundant in the beginning, to be sincere. It's as if there was a deliberate effort to drown out the still frail-timbred voice of a young literature with a parasitical deluge of plethoric commentary so that it is heard as little as possible. The fact is that the print runs of the works themselves are quite often smaller than those of the main publications discussing them, which constitutes a completely unique case in literature. It is thus no longer a question of criticism as such, but a downright counter-voice."

Odile Tobner, "La Parole Noire face au pouvoir et à la critique francophone" (Black Voices confronted with power and Francophone criticism)
Peuples Noirs, Peuples Africains, number 11, 1979

Press release

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The Chimurenga Library

An installation and an exhibition about Black Studies

by the Chimurenga Collective

2 April – 3 May 2021

Bibliothèque publique d'information, levels 1, 2 and 3

As part of the Africa2020 Season, the Centre Pompidou and the Bibliothèque publique d'information are giving a carte blanche to the South African Chimurenga collective, proposing a new edition of *The Chimurenga Library*, a long-term action begun in 2009 that set out to reimagine the library as a laboratory of wide-ranging curiosity, critical thinking, daydreaming, political commitment, partying and reading. *The Chimurenga Library* envisions the library as a conceptual and physical space where memory is preserved and history is decided.

This new edition, entitled *La Bibliothèque Chimurenga*, takes the form of an "Étude noire" (Black Study) of the Bpi collections. Like an investigation into the genealogy of black radical thinking in the francophone world, it presents a map of its "visible" archive in the Bpi, but also of its hidden archive derived from the intellectual, artistic and political production of Black people in the francophone world.



Chimurenga Chronic
On Circulations and the African Imagination of a Borderless World,
October 2018



Reading route
© 2020 Chimurenga

La Bibliothèque Chimurenga works by disseminating knowledge and infiltrating tools through

- **a bibliographic installation** that produces an alternative classification system for the content of the Bpi, which can be seen in the bookmarks in books featuring important Black Studies works. Then, lines on the floor forming new reading routes, punctuated by quotes selected by the collective of researchers, invite visitors to explore the library.

- **an exhibition**, or reading space, a meeting place for reading routes in level 2 of the Bpi. This space presents a range of diagrams, images, facsimiles of books, reviews and records relating to the collective's research.

- **a special issue of *The Chronic review*** co-edited by the Centre Pompidou available at the reading space and at the bookshop of the Centre Pompidou from 9 April. An event around this publication will take place at the Cité internationale des arts in spring/summer 2021 (date to be confirmed).

- **a presentation by the Pan African Space Station (PASS)**, between April and May 2021. Founded in 2008 by Chimurenga, the Pan African Space Station (PASS) is an ephemeral live radio station. Broadcasting directly on the internet, the PASS will establish a base in Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe) and in the [Lavoir Moderne Parisien](#) in La Goutte d'Or in Paris (Île-de-France).

A programme of films is also scheduled for 29 and 30 April in Cinema 1 of the Centre Pompidou.

The Chimurenga collective defines Black Studies as follows

Black Study denotes all the methods and the corpus of knowledge that Black people have developed in order to survive and thwart western modernity, the construction and consolidation of which are founded on slavery, colonisation and forms of apartheid. It is a fundamentally undisciplined way of learning that is based on relationships, group improvisation and reconnecting with a rooted knowledge of freedom. As the poet Fred Moten says, Black Study implies "to refuse that which has been refused to you". Black Study means engaging with the homeless, pushing back against a long history of forced movement, and necessitates a polyrhythmic attitude. Black Study constitutes the practice of "Blackness" – the socio-historic trajectory of Afro-descendant peoples, an experience that is lived and embodied, a method and a way of being in the world.

The Chimurenga collective was founded in 2002 by Ntone Edjabe, a journalist and musician from Cameroon who was born in Douala in 1970. He lives and works in Cape Town in South Africa – Chimurenga is a constantly-changing entity and a Pan-African platform that combines art and politics. Its current members are Graeme Arendse, Mamadou Diallo, Ntone Edjabe, Asanda Kaka, Bongani Kona, Moses Marz, Eva Munyiri and Bianca Van Rooi.

chimurengachronic.co.za/



Created in 2000, the **Department of Contemporary and Prospective Creation**, managed by Christine Macel, Head Curator of the Department of Contemporary and Prospective Creation, has introduced work devoted to an Afro-centred version of modern and contemporary African history since the age of independence, thanks to the arrival of Alicia Knock, a curator in the Department.

Reflecting the presence in the museum collections of some twenty North African artists born after 1960, this new dynamic has enabled the arrival of a great many works by artists from various Sub-Saharan African scenes, including the diasporas.

Alongside some earlier acquisitions, this initiative has made it possible to bring together a significant group of some fifty artists, with some founding figures like El Anatsui, David Koloane, Abdoulaye Konaté and Georges Adéagbo, as well as many younger artists like Cheikh N'Diaye, Billie Zangewa, Ibrahim Mahama and Jems Koko Bi.

In expanding the collection toward the African continent, as reflected in the recent "Global(e) Resistance" exhibition, it is essential to review a complex and often little-known history of the arts and the historical and identity-related framework that saw their development come into being, at the cusp of the colonial and post-colonial eras.

Continuing on from this approach, the invitation to Ntone Ejabe and Chimurenga in the framework of the Africa Season confirms a desire to shed light on the too-little known and fundamentally dispersed intellectual history of Black Studies, Pan-Africanism and negritude, along with the Black Atlantic. This invitation will thus contribute to a rereading of the history of relations between France and its former colonies, including the action and schools of thought and resistance in the diaspora and in the West Indies, from colonialism to independence and up until the present era. This work will enable an interrogation of the milestones of history and the history of art – heretofore written from the point of view of the West – with a view to producing a new historiographical methodology.

Presentation organised in the context of the 2020 Africa Season, with the support of the Institut Français and the sponsoring committee of the Africa 2020 Season.

www.saisonafrica2020.com

Africa Season 2020 is organised and run by the Institut Français with the support of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Culture, the Ministry for National Education and Youth, the Ministry for Sports, the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

General Curator: N'Goné Fall

The Sponsoring Committee of the Africa 2020 Season, chaired by M. Stéphane Richard, CEO of Orange, consists of: Fondation Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury, Orange, Total Foundation, Axian, Groupe Sipromad, JCDecaux, Pernod Ricard, Sanofi, Société Générale, VINCI, CFAO, ENGIE, Thales, Thomson Broadcast and Veolia.

In partnership with the Cité Internationale des Arts

Graphic design and production of facsimiles in collaboration with the École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris Cergy (ENSAPC)



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RER Châtelet-Les-Halles

Free admission

Conditions of access during the health
crisis available from bpi.fr

From Wednesday 20 January,
the library is open every day
from 11am to 5pm
Except Tuesdays.

Booking is mandatory at Affluences
in order to enter the Bpi.
Masks are mandatory in the library.

Due to the health crisis,
the Centre Pompidou is currently
closed.

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La Bpi is in
Facebook (@bpi.pompidou),
Twitter (@Bpi_Pompidou),
Instagram (@bpi_pompidou)
and Youtube (Bibliothèque publique
d'information)



Practical information

Exhibition

La Bibliothèque Chimurenga

2 April – 3 May 2021

Bibliothèque publique d'information, levels 1, 2 et 3

Curator

The Chimurenga collective

In collaboration with **Pascale Obolo, Amzat Boukari-Yabara, Amandine Nana, Amina Belghiti, Paul-Aimé William et Rosanna Puyol.**

Curatorial coordination

At Musée national d'art moderne

Christine Macel, chief curator, head of the Contemporary and Prospective Creation Department

Alicia Knock, curator, Contemporary and Prospective Creation Department

Assisted by **Aurélien Bernard**, Curatorial assistant

At Bibliothèque publique d'information

Emmanuèle Payen, curator, head of the cultural development and news department

Jérôme Chevrier, librarian

Elise Blin, Production Manager

Screen printing and digital printing workshop of the ENSAPC

directed by **Bérénice Lefebvre**

with **Alice Bondoki, Maximilien Curtis, Justin Ebanda Ebanda, Lorena Almarino Rojas,**

Maéva Conderolle, Louise Guegan, Garance Butler-Oliva.

Event organized as part of the Africa 2020 Season



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